

Glendale News Press

Smoking restrictions set to expand

Starting Sunday, several areas will join the list of places people aren't allowed to light up.

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Many Burbank residents already think twice before blowing smoke in public, but beginning Sunday, that concern will carry over to their apartment or condo.

As of May 1, private patios and balconies, play areas for children, swimming pools with children in the area, and residential units that share ventilation systems join the list of locations where smoking is prohibited within city limits.

Four years ago, City Council voted to ban smoking in hallways, stairwells, elevators, lobbies, laundry, trash and recreation rooms, gyms and within 5 feet of all entrances, exits and walkways at multi-family residences.

"It's a balancing act for us," said Michael Cusumano, a partner in the Burbank-based property firm Cusumano Real Estate Group. "We're constantly being constrained by more and more regulations, and we have to keep the balance between health issues and comfort issues of nonsmokers."

The firm owns a number of multi-family properties in the city and some residents have opted to create a non-smoking floor if all tenants agree.

"At least we know exactly what the rules are," said Cusumano. "Sometimes we have new restrictions and we don't know what has been established, but that is not the case here."

The City Council opted not to fund public education campaigns for the new rules due to budget constraints.

James Rigor of the Community Development Department was deemed the city's Secondhand Smoke Education Ambassador and worked on outreach to those affected by the new regulations. The outreach included public meetings, seminars for community groups and some advertising.

"There were mixed opinions about the ordinance," Rigor said. "Most of them just wanted more detailed information."

Assistant Community Development Director Terre Hirsch said many property managers and owners were already accustomed to dealing with smoking restrictions in other cities, such as Glendale, and were grateful for

the education effort.

“We know that it will take over a year to get the information out to everyone once it is in effect,” Hirsch said.
“Education first, and enforcement way last.”

Burbank police have issued only one citation for violations in residential complexes since the original restrictions were enacted in 2007.

The number of citations issued by Burbank police in public areas of the city has dropped by more than half, from the 165 tickets issued in 2010 to just 75 during the same time period this year, said Sgt. Robert Quesada.